



The Front Porch

The Newsletter of the City of Springfield,
Planning and Development Department's
Neighborhood Conservation Office
Fall/Winter 2001 Issue

Mission:

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of our community. Springfield must strive to promote strong neighborhoods that instill pride in their residents. Therefore, the Neighborhood Conservation Office is committed to working with the Community to ensure strong viable neighborhoods.

Citizens' Initiative Can Promote Public Trees

Numerous trees found both on private properties and public rights-of-way enhance a walk through many of Springfield's neighborhoods. Springfield's trees do what they do best: Produce oxygen for us to breathe; improve our air quality by storing harmful gases and removing pollutants; reduce soil erosion; reduce stormwater runoff by holding up rainfall in their canopy; filter cold winds in the winter; and cool us with their shade in the summer. A recent study by the University of California determined that a single large front-yard tree offering these benefits produces a value of \$111 each year.

Many Springfieldians take pride in living under the cover of our community's forest. This pride is bolstered by trees planted in public areas by the combined efforts of Ozark Greenways, the City's Public Works and Parks Departments, and civic groups. It all results in Springfield's history of being designated a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation since 1985.

Despite our "Tree City USA" status, a recent inventory of the city's street trees indicates a significant loss of public trees over the last 40 years. In the face of this loss, the city's planting efforts can be bolstered by the initiative of private citizens - and the fall months are the perfect time to plant. Whether you are inclined to plant a single tree along

the street in front of your house, or work with neighbors to beautify an entire corridor, the Public Works Department's Public Grounds Division can accommodate your plan through the use of a Permit to Plant/Work on City Trees.

Take the example of the Phelps Neighborhood Association: The group planted 48 trees along Dollison Avenue in January, 1999. The trees planted by the

Association were made possible by a \$12,000 grant through the Missouri Department of Conservation. The neighborhood association contributed an additional \$3,000 for the project.

By filling out an *Application for Permit to Plant/Work on City Trees*, the Association and the City Public Works Department developed a beautification plan that incorporated a variety of ornamental and shade-type tree species. Trees were selected from the City's "List of Recommended Trees" due to their fit with the planting space. The redbuds, red maples and serviceberry trees planted along Dollison were sited so as not to interfere with overhead utility wires,

which lessened the prospect of unsightly, labor-intensive pruning in the future.

Keep in mind, obtaining a Permit is not required when planting trees on your own property - just when planting trees within the public right-of-way. **Fp**

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Tree planted on Dollison Avenue, at the initiative of the Phelps Neighborhood Association, continue to thrive and serve as an amenity to all Springfieldians.



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(Citizens' Initiative Can Promote Public Trees continued)

In addition, the Permit reminds applicants that the Missouri One Call System is to be contacted to ensure planting trees does not disrupt public underground utilities.

The Permit process also assists in making sure that your gift of a public tree will not inadvertently create future problems for local utility providers, and that it will be cared for as it continues to mature. Such a cooperative approach in improving our urban forest will

result in aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods and public thoroughfares for many generations.

For questions or comments regarding trees in public right-of-ways, or for obtaining a Permit to Plant/Work on City Trees, contact Public Grounds at 864-1136. Missouri One Call System Inc. can be reached at 1-800-344-7483. For information on the grant programs used by the Phelps Neighborhood Association, contact the Missouri Department of Conservation at 895-6880.

ACrimeSeen@ Police Calls Map

With a low crime rate, and relatively high standard of living, Springfieldians enjoy a serene quality of life. To uphold the integrity of our community by keeping residents informed, the Springfield Police Department has published an interactive Web site documenting police calls throughout the city. The site includes the "CrimeSeen" city map where crime data can be obtained for the year 2000. The data is organized by police atoms which are geographic units the police department uses to divide and organize the city. By selecting a specific atom citizens can find the total number of police calls in a given area and the type of violations reported. Violation calls listed range from basic nuisance complaints such as fireworks or noise to violent crime reports. Each atom lists the number of calls taken for each type of crime and the time of year.

Neighborhoods can use this information to detect and address particular problems they may have regarding crime risks and focus on prevention.

As Sue Schofield, head of Research and Development at the Springfield Police Department explains, "Citizens will have an opportunity to evaluate their neighborhoods and contribute to crime problem solutions".

As we all are aware, effective crime prevention includes citizens and police working together to understand crime and how to address it. The goal is that by keeping the community informed on reported crimes, the heightened awareness will help individuals know what to look for and better protect themselves in the future.

To access this information, visit the City of Springfield Web site at www.springfieldmogov.org. Click on egov and find "CrimeSeen" under Online Services. Or from the Police Web page, click on the "Police Calls Map."



Accessing the "CrimeSeen" police calls map and database when seeking crime statistics can save you trip to police headquarters.

If you have additional questions or comments regarding "CrimeSeen" you may contact Sue Schofield at the Police Department by calling 864-1722. This resource is one manner in which the City of Springfield Police Department continues to provide quality service to our community through integrity, fairness, open communication, and a helpful attitude.

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Contact us: Phone: 864-1033 • Fax: 864-1030
e-mail: city@ci.springfield.mo.us
homepage: www.springfieldmogov.org
Mail to: City of Springfield, c/o Planning and
Development, P.O. Box 8368, Springfield, MO
65801



Neighborhood Preservation Tax Credit Program

Have you been considering home improvements or new construction for your property? If you are a property owner and live in any of the qualifying areas, the Neighborhood Preservation Act Tax Credit Program authorizes state tax credits for residential rehabilitation and construction of properties located in distressed communities or defined census blocks. As a result of Senate Bill 20 signed into legislation by the late Gov. Mel Carnahan in July 1999, taxpayers who qualify can collect 15 percent to 35 percent of the total rehabilitation cost in tax credits depending on the magnitude of the project.

As described in our Fall/Winter 1999 issue of *The Front Porch*, the Neighborhood Preservation Act (originally the Housing Preservation Act, Senate Bill 20) is designed to improve neighborhoods in Missouri by offering financial incentives for qualifying residents. Quite simply, its goal is to strengthen the state's communities. The Act was passed during the 1999 Missouri General Assembly and became effective Jan. 1, 2000. Home improvement and rehabilitation projects become more feasible for a greater number of Missouri residents because the Neighborhood Preservation Act does not set personal income guidelines for individuals to qualify.

Applications for the 2002 calendar year program became available on Aug. 31, 2001, and are due back no later than Nov. 16, 2001 for approval. The Missouri Department of Economic Development is responsible for the administration and issuance of tax credits under this program.

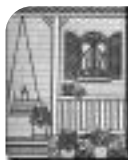
If you would like more information about tax credits this year or would like to be placed on the mailing list for 2002, please visit the Neighborhood Preservation Act Web site at www.ecodev.state.mo.us/cd/npa or the Department of Economic Development Web site at: www.missouridevelopment.org/cd/npa. Or call the office at 573-522-6521.

About our Enclosures

*Enclosed within this issue of **The Front Porch** is a copy of the **Park Referendum** Information brochure. This brochure provide details of the Nov. 6, 2001 referendum for Greene County voters to consider a 1/4-cent sales tax to fund parks, trails and open space. If approved, the 1/4-cent sales tax would take effect in April 2002, when 1/8-cent of the law enforcement sales tax expires. The resulting net tax increase of 1/8-cent would provide an estimated \$50 million over 5 years for area-wide parks and recreation projects. Please read the enclosed brochure for further details.*

For additional brochures or information, please call 864-1049/864-1010 or the Election hotline at 864-1400. You can also visit the following Web sites: www.springfieldmogov.org or www.parkboard.org.

*Please note the informational letter from The Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division, that is included in this issue of **The Front Porch**. The letter contains timely information and helpful ideas when dealing with the disposal of yard waste within the City of Springfield. To learn more about the Yardwaste Recycling Center (YRC), please call the recycling hotline, 864-1904.*



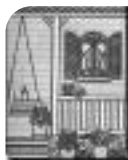
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Publication Spotlight

"Springfield Home Loan Programs"

Get your copies of brochures providing details on Springfield's housing rehabilitation loan programs. The brochures provide details about the city's Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Loan Program, and Springfield's Home Program: Loans for the Rehabilitation of Rental Property. These programs help low-to-moderate income people achieve safe, decent and affordable housing by providing low-interest loans to cover a variety of housing rehabilitation projects. The result is to help boost neighborhood revitalization by easing the financial burden for residents interested in home improvement. To qualify for financing, income and property location conditions must be met and verified.

Copies of these free brochures, and additional information on both loan programs, are available on the 3rd floor of the Busch Municipal Building at 840 North Boonville. Call (417) 864-1038, check online at: www.springfieldmogov.org or e-mail: cityrehab@ci.springfield.mo.us



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